closed Statement-I (*See* below).

(b) The information is given in the enclosed Statement-II (*See* below)

(c) and (d) Government provides fund for development of refineries thorugh OIDB and other means depending on several factors such as commercial viability of the project, avilability of funds with OIDB as well as internal and extra-budgetary resources of the Companies. Accordingly, refineries in Assam may be provided funds depending upon the said factors.

Statement-I

Collection of Cess on Crude Oil

(Rs./Crores)

Year	*Amount*
1993-94	2160.89
1994-95	2548.97
1995-96	2800.63
Total	7510.49

Statement-II

*Contribution of Assam towards Crude Cess**

(Rs./Crores)

Year	*Amount*
1993-94	434.85
1994-95	431.62
1995-96	437.20

Statement regarding OIDB assistance to Refineries in Assam

(Rs./Crores)

Year	*Amount*
1993-94	50.00
1994-95	102.44
1995-96	251.49
Total	403.93

*The statement of collection of cess has been provided by the Office of Comissioner of Central Excise and Customs, Shillong.

Pak participation in India-Iran Gas pipeline Project

4363. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 84 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 27th February, 1997 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan had earlier refused to permit the proposed India-Iran Gas pipeline to pass through that country's territorial waters but is now keen to participate in the project, as reported in the Times of India dated the 24th February, 1997;

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) whether any tripartite talks between India, Iran and Pakistan are likely to take place in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) The Government of Pakistan have not yet given their consent to the pipeline route survey for the proposed Iran-India gas pipeline through the Exclusive Economic Zone of Pakistan. Pakistan has not formally expressed any interest in participating in the project.

(b) The Government of Pakistan is being requested to expedite clearance of the pipeline route survey.

(c) No tripartite talks have been scheduled yet.

Supply of gas to Ramgarh Power Plant

4364. SHRI RAMDAS AGRWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria followed for gas prices for various power plants in the country, particularly the Ramgarh Gas Power Plant in Jaisalmer District of Rajasthan;

(b) whether it is a fact that the gas

beign supplied to the Ramgarh plant contains high concentration of Nitrogen which does not contribute to heat energy/ power generation; and

(c) if so, whether Government would examine the Rajasthan Government's request to review the price of the Ramgarh gas plant and notify the concessional rate for the same to boost gas utilisation from small gasfield in Rajasthan; if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) The price of gas is Rs. 1850 per thousand cubic metres excluding royalty, taxes & transportation charges. In the North-East, the price is Rs. 1000 per thousand cubic metres with the provision of a discount of Rs. 400 per thousand cubic metre.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Ramgarh Plant is entitled to pay a lower price of gas appropriate to the low calorific value.

Petroleum Exploration Licencing Policy

4365. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the new petroleum exploration licencing policy being put in place of the existing one, as enunciated by Prime Minister at a conference at Goa recently;

(b) in what way it differs from the existing system and the details of benefits which would accrue from it;

(c) the areas of exploration which would be offered under the new system;

(d) whether on-shore and off-shore areas offers would be clubbed or be put up separately under the new system; and

(e) the details of the likely investment under the new system on on-shore and off-shore exploration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) and (b) The salient features of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) announced recently are given below:—

— Open availability of exploration acreage in addition to existing bidding rounds.
— Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd. and Oil India Ltd. to compete for obtaining exploration licences on competitive basis alongwith other private sector companies.
— Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd. and Oil India Ltd. to be provided a level playing field by providing same fiscal and contract terms as available for private companies.
— Special package to encourage exploration in deep water and frontier areas.
— Freedom to contractors for marketing of crude oil and gas in the domestic market.

(c) and (d) Both on-shore and off-shore areas will be offered under NELP depending upon their availability.

(e) It is too early to estimate the amount of investment under NELP.

Supply of Kerosene oil below National Average

4366. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa are Supplied kerosene in quantities, much below the national average; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) and (b) Kerosene is allocated to the States/UTs on a historical basis, i.e based on past allocations and consumption. The per capita availability of kerosene in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa